

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 222

EA 031 704

AUTHOR Newton, Rose Mary; Zeitoun, Peter
TITLE Do Teacher Reactions to Features of Principalship Vary by Gender?
PUB DATE 2002-00-00
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Gender Issues; *Principals; Recruitment; Sex Bias; Sex Fairness; Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; Social Cognition

ABSTRACT

As school principals retire and the principal shortage is predicted to intensify over the next decade, proposals are being made for altering the role of the principal and for providing candidates with realistic and appealing job descriptions. This study was conducted to examine whether specified features of the principal's role influence the attitudes and job-search behaviors of men and women differently. Equal numbers of male (n=84) and female (n=84) public teachers read and rated descriptions of a vacant principal position. The job descriptions emphasized that the successful applicant would be expected to use a specified administrative model and work a specified number of hours per week. Contrary to expectation, an analysis-of-variance procedure revealed that androcentric bias may be declining in recruitment messages in job descriptions as sex-role and gender discrimination disappears. Position announcements depicting a democratic administrative model and shorter work week appealed to males more than to females. These results suggest research on how organizational representatives can reinvent the principalship in ways that will be more appealing to women. (Contains 26 references and 3 tables.) (RT)

Do Teacher Reactions to Features of Principalship Vary by Gender?

Rose Mary Newton
Assistant Professor
The University of Alabama

Peter Zeitoun
Research Assistant
The University of Alabama

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.

☐ Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

R NEWTON

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

The findings reported in this paper are part of a larger study examining teacher reactions to features of the principalship. Equal numbers of male ($n = 84$) and female ($n = 84$) public teachers read and rated descriptions of a vacant principal position. The job descriptions emphasized that the successful applicant would be expected to use a specified administrative model and work a specified number of hours per week. Contrary to our expectations, an analysis of variance procedure revealed that the position announcements depicting a democratic administrative model and a shorter workweek appealed to males more than females.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Do Teacher Reactions to Features of Principalship Vary by Gender?

Several trends have converged to create an alarming shortage of qualified applicants for principal vacancies. Principals are retiring in record numbers, a high number of principals are opting for non-administrative positions, and classroom teachers are increasingly reluctant to fill the vacated positions (Barker, 1997; Doud & Keller, 1998; McAdams, 1998; Muse & Thomas, 1991). Nationwide, superintendents report difficulty in filling vacancies (Adams, 1999; Barker, 1997; Educational Research Service [ERS], 1998) and the shortage is predicted to intensify over the course of the next decade as more than one-third of the current cohort of principals reach retirement age (Doud & Keller, 1998; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1997). Recent proposals include altering the role to provide principals with more realistic job descriptions (Adams, 1999; Anderson, 1991; ERS, 1998; Read, 2000).

Determining which alterations will appeal to prospective applicants is difficult because reactions to aspects of the job are subject to individual differences such as gender (Schwab, Rynes & Aldag, 1987). Educational theorists argue that the traditional model of school administration promotes behaviors that accommodate a male stereotype, and consequently, diminish female attraction for principalship (Barker, 1997; Shakeshaft, 1989, 1999). Furthermore, because women continue to be largely responsible for household duties, expectations for principals to attend evening events in addition to a full workweek may deter females, as prospective applicants, more than males (ERS and others, 1998; Shakeshaft, 1989).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

One explanation for gender segregation in the educational workplace is that in an androcentric society, males are more likely to be promoted to prestigious positions.

Androcentrism...is the elevation of the masculine to the level of the universal and the ideal and honoring of men and the male principle above women and the female. This perception creates a belief in male superiority and a masculine value system in which female values, experiences, and behaviors are viewed as inferior. (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 95)

Some maintain that androcentric bias is embedded in the constructs of present theories in educational administration (Adkison, 1981; Hanson, 1984; Shakeshaft, 1981). An assumption driving this research is that androcentric bias may also become manifest in the content of recruitment messages that implicitly, if not explicitly, accommodate both the male model of school administration and the division of household work assumed by males. To test this hypothesis, we measured the reactions of male and female teachers to principal vacancy announcements specifying a preferred administrative model and designating a number of hours to be worked each week.

BACKGROUND

Differences in male and female approaches to school administration are rooted in the bureaucratic model of schooling adopted in the early years of American education. During the first third of the twentieth century, job descriptions called for principals to implement the intentions of others. Consequently, male principals, drawing on their backgrounds in both business and the military, used an authoritarian and directive approach to supervise the work of female teachers. Such job expectations were "born out of the hierarchical demands of boards of education for school-site agents, nourished by the early twentieth century romance with the corporate manager, and weaned on the dream of scientific management" (Cuban, 1988, p. 57). Females, on the other hand, joined organizations such as the National Congress of Mothers where they learned to use democratic and egalitarian styles of decision making and leadership

that were incompatible with the authoritarian approaches characteristic of the bureaucratic model of schooling (Burstyn, 1980).

In the last decades of the twentieth century, changes in society, the economy, and the political arena are compelling educational organizations to move away from the traditional management models of school administration designed to maintain organizational stability in favor of emerging leadership models designed to effect organizational change. Metaphors used to describe today's principals (e.g., community servants, organizational architects, social architects, moral educators) convey the notion that successful principals initiate more than they implement, reshape schools to be responsive to all students rather than shape children to fit the school, and establish new purposes of schooling rather than manage the existing ones (Murphy & Shipman, 1999). These images appear to be consistent with the ways that women perceive the principal's role.

A second feature of principalship, time commitment, may deter individuals, from seeking principal vacancies. Today's principals spend more time completing paperwork, supervising after-school activities, marketing their schools, becoming politically involved to generate financial support, and working with social service agencies (Doud & Keller, 1998). Furthermore, community members continue to expect principals to attend every after-school event. Consequently, the typical elementary school principal works at least 50 hours per week and the typical high school principal works 60-80 hours per week (Doud & Keller, 1998; Read, 2000; Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). Such expectations overload the role, compromise the ability of principals to balance family and work life, and detract from administrator efforts to improve student learning (Doud & Keller, 1998; ERS & others, 1998; Read, 2000). Evidence is mounting that excessive time requirements deter prospective applicants, particularly women, from seeking principalship and, at least partially, account for the high turnover rate among principals (Barker, 1997; Read, 2000).

The purpose of the study was to examine whether specified features of the principal's role influence the attitudes and job search behaviors of men and women differently. We anticipated that the administrative model of schooling in use for much of this century and the ever lengthening workweek represent androcentric bias by accommodating the work behaviors of men more than women.

METHODOLOGY

Equal numbers of male ($n = 84$) and female ($n = 84$) public school teachers read and evaluated an announcement of a position vacancy. The independent variables manipulated in the position announcements were administrative model (traditional, emerging) and time commitment (45 hours, 55 hours, 65 hours). Gender (male, female) was an inactive independent variable. The dependent variable was a composite score representing teacher attraction to, and willingness to pursue, principalship. Given the levels of the independent variables, we used a $2 \times 3 \times 2$ completely-crossed fixed-factor analysis of variance design which yielded 12 cells ($n = 14$).

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Using a random process to assign the participants to treatment conditions, we mailed a demographic data form, one version of an announcement of a principal vacancy, and an evaluation instrument to a national sample of male ($n = 300$) and female ($n = 300$) public school teachers acquired from Market Data Retrieval. Two weeks after the initial contact, we mailed a postcard to encourage non-participants to return the completed instruments. Three weeks later, we mailed replacement instruments to all non-respondents. This process yielded 242 useable instruments representing a 40% response rate.

We determined the sample size by performing a power analysis according to procedures recommended by Cohen (1988). Based on a desired minimum effect size ($\omega^2 = .06$), a defined level of significance ($\alpha = .05$), and a specified power level (.80), the minimum number of participants needed was 168. To achieve the desired sample size, we sorted the returned instruments into their appropriate cells (e.g. female, emerging, 45 hours per week) and used a table of random numbers to select the minimum number of participants ($n = 14$) needed in each cell. This process yielded equal numbers of males ($n = 84$) and females ($n = 84$) and equal cell sizes.

According to the National Center of Education Statistics (2000), the median age of the participating teachers (46 years) was only slightly higher than the median age of public school teachers nationally (44 years). In terms of ethnicity, the profile of the participating teachers (White = 85.7%; Minority = 14.3) was also quite similar to the ethnic profile of teachers nationally (White = 90.7%; Minority = 9.3). Over 90% of participants reported that they have either a bachelors (41.3%) or a masters (55.4%) as their highest degree. Interestingly, 42.9 % of the returned instruments came from the elementary level, while middle (25.6%) and high school (28%) participants completed the rest of the remaining returned instruments.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The independent variables were administrative model, time commitment, and gender. Each version of the job description depicted the administrative model as either traditional or emerging and the time commitment as 45 hours per week, 55 hours per week, or 65 hours per week. Gender was an assigned independent variable determined by the self-report of the participating teachers.

To establish content validity for the administrative model we performed the following steps. First, we reviewed the literature to identify the style(s) of leadership purported to be characteristic of men (directive, authoritative, managerial) and women (instructional, transformational, moral, democratic, participative). We used the term "administrative model" to accommodate the multiple leadership styles ascribed to men and women. We identified the administrative model ascribed to males as "traditional" and the administrative model ascribed to women as "emerging". Next, we identified 71 discrete leadership behaviors performed by principals. We provided a panel of professors in Educational Administration ($N = 5$) with definitions of the traditional and emerging models of school administration and the 71 identified behaviors. Members of the panel used a matrix to categorize each behavior as characteristic of either the traditional or emerging model of school administration. We retained statements that panel members categorized unanimously for use in the study instruments (see Table 1). The definitions provided to members of the panel follow:

Principals who adopt the traditional model of school administration function as organizational bureaucrats and scientifically-trained managers who value efficiency, focus on technical and clerical issues, carry out the wishes of individual above them in the organizational hierarchy, and assure that teachers are carrying out the prescribed curriculum (Cuban, 1988).

Principals who adopt the emerging model of school administration value learning, focus on initiating change, reconstruct conceptions of authority and school structure to make them instrumental to teaching and learning, invent ways to make schools fit children, and invest heavily in establishing purposes (Murphy & Shipman, 1999).

Manipulating the levels of the independent variables yielded six versions of announcements for a position vacancy. Each version, identical in length and format, contained general information held constant across all versions, behaviors characteristic of a specified administrative model (either traditional or emerging), and a required time commitment (either 45 hours per week, 55 hours per week, or 65 hours per week).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable for this study was teacher attraction to and willingness to pursue principalship. The composite score of the participant responses to four questions represented a measure of overall job attraction: (1) "How would you rate the overall attractiveness of the description of the principal vacancy?" (2) "How likely would you be to apply for the principal job described?" (3) "How likely would you be to accept an interview for the principal as described?" and, (4) "How likely would you be to accept the job of principal as described?" The participants recorded their responses on 5-point Likert-type scales with 5 representing a more favorable rating.

PILOT STUDY

Experienced teachers ($N = 31$) participated in a pilot study to ascertain whether they perceived the manipulations as intended and to assess the reliability of the dependent variable. We retained the piloted instruments for use in the actual study because most participants (93%) accurately perceived the manipulations and because the coefficient alpha for the four-item measure of job attractiveness (.91) was within the acceptable range for use in social science research.

HYPOTHESES

The null hypotheses tested in this study related to three independent variables: (a) administrative model; (b) the time devoted to the job; and (c) gender. These variables and the three-way anova design permitted testing with seven sources of variance: three main effects, three two-way interactions, and one three-way interaction. The hypotheses addressing the main effects were stated as follows:

Hypothesis 1. There is no difference in teaching ratings of a recruitment message emphasizing a specified administrative model (traditional, emerging) associated with teacher ratings of the job.

Hypothesis 2. There is no difference in teacher ratings of a recruitment message emphasizing a specified number of hours to be worked per week (45 hours, 55 hours, 65 hours) associated with teacher ratings of the job.

Hypothesis 3. There is no difference in teacher ratings of a recruitment message associated with the gender of the participant.

In addition to testing for these main effects, we tested for all two-way and three-way interactions between and among the independent variables.

LIMITATIONS

The study results should be interpreted within the parameters of two limitations. The response rate (40%) for this study was somewhat disappointing. In addition, the study is limited to the examination of two variables purported to influence the job search behaviors of males and females differently. An open-ended question inviting the participants to explain their reactions to the announcements may have enriched the study findings by unearthing other variables of interest.

RESULTS

Table 2 contains the cell means and standard deviations for participant ratings of the position announcement. The cell means reflect several trends: (1) overall, men rated the position announcements more positively than women, (2) both men and women rated the emerging or democratic administrative model more positively than the traditional administrative model, and (3) attraction for the job increased as the number of hours to be worked decreased.

An analysis of variance procedure ANOVA (Table 3) revealed a significant main effect for administrative model ($F = 5.39, p < .02$) with both males and females rating the emerging or democratic model of school administration more favorably than the traditional model of school administration. Also, statistical testing revealed a significant main effect for gender ($F = 22.60, p < .00$) with males rating the position announcements significantly more favorably than females. Finally, statistical testing detected a three-way interaction ($F = 3.25, p < .04$). Further analysis revealed that the three-way interaction was between gender and administrative model across hours per week ($F = 3.9, p < .022$). Because the number of hours worked per week had three levels, we computed Tukey's HSD test to determine the precise nature of the interaction effect (see Keppel, 1991). When the position announcement emphasized a traditional administrative model, males responded significantly more positively to the 55-hour workweek than they did to the 65-hour workweek.

DISCUSSION

Our findings failed to support our first null hypothesis. There was a significant difference in teachers ratings of depictions of the principal's job associated with a specified administrative model. Overall, teachers rated recruitment messages emphasizing the emerging or democratic administrative model more positively than they rated recruitment messages emphasizing the traditional or more authoritarian administrative model. This finding is consistent with others (e.g., Mertz & McNeely, 1997) who suggest that differences in the leadership styles of men and women may be lessening. Barber and Daly (1996) speculated that reductions in sex role differentiation, gender discrimination, and occupational segregation in the past decade have lessened the differences in the leadership styles of males and females. While other explanations for the no-difference finding are possible, the most optimistic interpretation of the favorable male ratings of the administrative model previously ascribed to women is that the democratic administrative behavior ascribed to women may no longer be considered inferior. In other words, androcentricism may be on the wane.

The study results supported the second null hypothesis. We detected no significant main effect of the hours to be worked per week on ratings of the position. This result was surprising because the literature (e.g. Lortie, 1975; Shakeshaft, 1989; Read, 2000) is replete with statements that the time requirement discourages individuals from seeking the position and contributes to job turnover. Perhaps principals who complain about excessive time requirements are actually responding to the "Superprincipal" or "Great Expectations" syndrome described by Michael Copland (2000). Because the effective schools literature heightened recognition of the principal's role in school improvement efforts, the role of the principal became central in the reform initiatives and accountability movements of the 1980's. During the final three decades of the 20th century, scholars devoted considerable time to developing conceptions of educational leaders (community servants, organizational architects, social architects, moral educators). Copland contends that "when considered en masse rather than separately, these myriad views create unintended dark consequences that fuel the current problems of supply and quality in the principalship" (p. 531).

The study results did not support our third null hypothesis. There was a significant difference in teacher ratings of the position announcements associated with gender with males rating the recruitment messages significantly more positively than females. This finding was detected even when the position announcement emphasized the democratic administrative model ascribed to women generally and a 45 hour workweek designed to be compatible with home responsibilities. These results question whether reinventing principalship along these lines would attract more female applicants and, therefore, provide sufficient leverage for ending gender segregation in the educational workplace. The challenge for researchers is to continue to explore how the principalship can be reinvented in ways that will appeal to more women.

The results supported our null hypotheses for all two-way interactions between the independent variables. However, we found no support for our null hypothesis regarding the three-way interaction among the independent variables. Males rated the recruitment messages emphasizing the traditional administrative model and a 55 hour workweek significantly more positively than they did the traditional administrative model emphasizing a 65 hour work week. A practical implication of this finding is that males who prefer the traditional administrative model are significantly more likely to apply for administrative positions requiring them to work 55 hours per week than for administrative positions requiring them to work 65 hours per week. Stated another way, reinventing principalship in ways that reduce the length of the workweek by ten hours may be an effective recruitment technique for men who endorse the traditional approach to school administration.

If the recruitment goal is to reinvent principalship in ways that will increase the diversity of the applicant pool, our results are both promising and perplexing. The results are promising because it appears that the democratic administrative style ascribed to women is valued by both male and female teachers. The results are perplexing because, despite depictions of a democratic working environment and a 45 hour workweek, women were significantly less attracted to the principalship than were males. Women represent a large untapped reservoir of talent for positions in educational administration. The research challenge remains. How can organizational representatives reinvent the principalship in ways that will be more appealing to women?

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. P. (1999). Good principals, good schools. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 29, 8-11.
- Adams, J. P. (1999). Survey of SCUM California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Holders. California State University, CA: Northridge.
- Adkison, J. A. (1981). Women in school administration: A review of the research. Review of Educational Research, 51, 311-343.
- Anastasi, A., & Urbina, S. (1997). Psychological testing (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Anderson, M. E. (1991). Principals: How to train, recruit, select, induct, and evaluate leaders for America's schools. ERIC Clearinghouse on educational Management, College of Education, University of Oregon.
- Barber, A. E., & Daly, C. L. (1996). Compensation and diversity: New pay for a new workforce? In E. E. Kossek & S. A. Lobel (Eds.), Managing diversity: Human resource strategies for transforming the workplace (pp. 194-216). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Barker, S. L. (1997). Is your successor in your schoolhouse? Finding principal candidates. NASSP Bulletin, 82, 85-91.
- Burstyn, L. N. (1980). Historical perspectives on women in educational leadership. In S. K. Biklen & M. B. Brannigan (Eds.), Women and educational leadership (pp. 65-75). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.
- Cohen, J. (1988). Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Copland, M. (2000). The myth of the superprincipal. Phi Delta Kappan, 82, 528-533.
- Cuban, L. (1988). The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Doud, J. L., & Keller, E. P. (1998). The K-8 principal in 1998: A 10-year study of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals.
- Educational Research Service; National Association of Elementary School Principals; and National Association of Secondary School Principals (1998). Is there a shortage of qualified candidates for openings in the principalship? An exploratory study. Arlington, VA.
- Hanson, M. (1984). Exploration of mixed metaphors in educational administration research. Issues in Education, 2(3), 167-185.
- Lortie, D. (1975). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Murphy, J., & Shipman, N. (1999). The interstate school leaders licensure consortium: A standards-based approach to strengthening educational leadership. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 13, 205-224.
- McAdams, R. P. (1998). Who'll run the schools? The American School Board Journal, 185, 37-39.
- Muse, I. D., & Thomas, G. J. (1999). The thinning ranks of rural school administration: The principalship in trouble. Rural Educator, 13, 8-12.
- National Center for Education Statistics (1997). Digest of education statistics 1997 (U. S. Department of Education Publication No. NCES 98-015). Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Education Statistics (2000). Digest of education statistics 2000 (U. S. Department of Education Publication No. NCES 2001-034). Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office.

Read, A. (2000). Is it any wonder we're experiencing a shortage of school leaders? The School Community Journal, 10, 57-80.

Schwab, D. P., Rynes, S. L., & Aldag, R. J. (1987). Theories and research on job search and choice. In K. M. Rowland, & G. R. Ferris (Eds.), Research in personnel and human resource management (Vol. 5, pp. 129-166). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Shakeshaft, C. S. (1981). A feminist critique of feminist research in educational administration. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 208 461).

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). Women in educational administration. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Shakeshaft, C. (1999). The struggle to include a more gender inclusive profession. In J. Murphy, & K. S. Lewis (Eds.), Handbook of research on educational administration (2nd ed., pp. 99-118). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Yerkes, D. M., & Guaglianone, C. L. (1998). Where have all the high school administrators gone? Thrust for Educational Leadership, 28, 10-14.

Table 1
Principal Behaviors Consistent with the Emerging and Traditional Administrative Models of School Administration

Emerging Administrative Model

Empower teacher to become involved in school affairs.
 Develop, articulate, implement, and exercise stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared/supported by the school community.
 Lead in reflective and reflective and self-critical processes and assure that teachers assist students in constructing knowledge.
 Engage teachers and community members in decision making.

Traditional Administrative Model

Exercise control over all school procedures and processes.
 Spend the majority of the workweek engaged in school activities related to the day-to-day planning, coordination, control, and overall operation of the school.
 Closely supervise the teachers.
 Issue direct orders to individuals under his or her supervision when needed.

Table 2
Summary of Cell Means and Standard Deviations

<u>Administrative Model</u>	<u>Emerging</u>		<u>Traditional</u>	
<u>Hours per Week</u>	Female	Male	Female	Male
45 Hours				
<u>M</u>	8.79	13.79	8.86	8.64
<u>SD</u>	3.45	5.31	4.57	3.37
55 Hours				
<u>M</u>	8.29	10.50	7.50	12.36
<u>SD</u>	5.14	4.83	4.05	4.67
65 Hours				
<u>M</u>	7.29	11.58	6.15	8.00
<u>SD</u>	2.49	4.00	1.75	4.29

Note. Means and standard deviations are based on additive composite scores.

Coefficient alpha = .91.

N = 168. n = 14.

Table 3
Analysis of Variance for the Reactions of Males and Females to Administrative Model and Hours per Week

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Hours per Week	2	102.16	51.08	3.01*
Gender	1	384.02	384.02	22.60**
Administrative Model	1	91.52	91.52	5.39*
Hours per Week x Gender	2	9.44	4.72	.28
Hours per Week x Administrative Model	2	85.03	42.54	2.50
Gender x Administrative Model	1	27.52	27.52	1.62
Hours per Week x Gender x Administrative Model	2	110.37	55.19	3.25*
Error	165	2651.00	16.99	
Total	167	3461.12	20.73	

Coefficient Alpha for Four-Item Composite Score = .91.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.